



Data Points

RESULTS FROM THE 2008 CALIFORNIA WOMEN'S HEALTH SURVEY

Infertility is a multifaceted health problem impacting a substantial number of couples of reproductive age often leading to costly and time-consuming treatments.^{1,2} Infertility may be caused by or related to a variety of factors, including hormonal and medical (e.g., history of pelvic inflammatory disease), lifestyle (e.g., nutrition and exercise), and exogenous exposures (e.g., tobacco smoke).^{3,4} Infertility is a priority addressed in the Healthy People 2010 objective 9-12, which states: "Reduce the proportion of married couples whose ability to conceive or maintain a pregnancy is impaired."⁵

In the 2008 California Women's Health Survey (CWHS), 4,978 women ages 18 and older were asked, "Have you ever

tried for more than 12 months to get pregnant and weren't successful?" and "Have you ever been told by a doctor or other health professional that you have a fertility problem?" and if so, "How old were you when you were told this?" In the analyses, responses were weighted by age and race/ethnicity to reflect the 2000 California adult female population. The proportions of women responding yes were compared by age, race/ethnicity, and health insurance status using the Chi-square test. Responses were also compared qualitatively to responses from these questions asked in the 2003 CWHS (for adult women ages 50 or younger) and the 2007 CWHS.^{6,7} Too few women ages 18 to 24 reported problems conceiving or infertility, so they were not included.

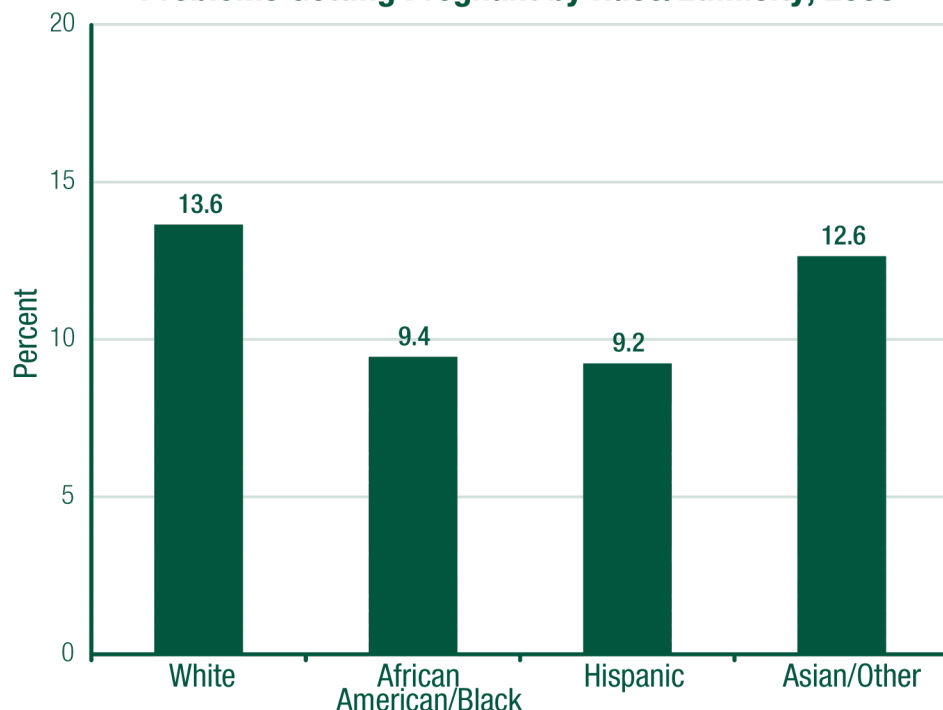
Difficulty Getting Pregnant and History of Infertility Diagnosis in California Women, 2008

California Department of Public Health
Division of Environmental and Occupational Disease Control

Public Health Message: Approximately one in eight California women experience a period of difficulty getting pregnant, and about half this number have been diagnosed with infertility. The differences by race/ethnicity may be related to differences in the distribution of other demographic factors such as age at first childbearing, awareness, and care-seeking behaviors. The difference by health insurance status in women receiving an infertility diagnosis, but not in women experiencing problems getting pregnant, may indicate that some women who could benefit from receiving a medical diagnosis and intervention do not have access to fertility services.

Figure 1

Problems Getting Pregnant by Race/Ethnicity, 2008



Source: California Women's Health Survey, 2008

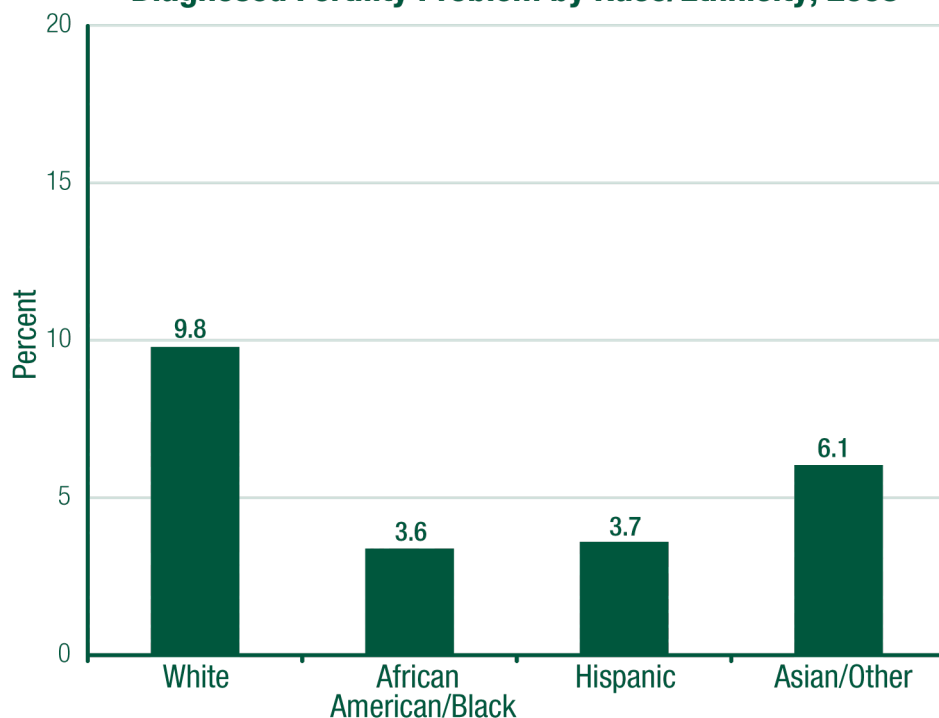
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Figure 2

Diagnosed Fertility Problem by Race/Ethnicity, 2008



Source: California Women's Health Survey, 2008

In 2008, 12.2 percent of California women surveyed reported having ever tried to get pregnant for more than 12 months without succeeding, which was within the range of responses in previous years (11.0 percent in 2003 and 13.4 percent in 2007).

- The proportion varied significantly by age, with women ages 35 to 44 and ages 45 to 54 most likely to report ever experiencing problems getting pregnant (14.8 and 14.3 percent, respectively), followed by ages 55 to 64 (13.7 percent), ages 25 to 34 (12.3 percent) and ages 65 or older (9.8 percent; $P < .05$).
- White women were more likely to report having ever experienced problems getting pregnant (13.6 percent) than African American/Black women (9.4 percent), Hispanic women (9.2 percent) and Asian/Other women (12.6 percent; $P < .05$; see Figure

1). Only 7.6 percent of Asian/Other women reported these problems in 2003, but rates for other race/ethnicity categories were similar.

- Women with health insurance were not significantly more likely to report problems getting pregnant (12.4 percent) than women without insurance (10.4 percent).

In 2008, 6.4 percent of California women reported ever being told they had a fertility problem; however, 17.2 percent did not provide a response. Among respondents, 7.7 percent reported problems, similar to the 2007 results.

- Although not significant, a slightly higher proportion of women ages 45 to 54 (9.8 percent) reported ever having been diagnosed with fertility problems than did women ages 55 to 64 (8.1 percent), women 65 or older (6.2 percent), women ages 35 to 44

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(8.8 percent), and women 25 to 34 (6.4 percent; $P = .09$).

- White women were significantly more likely to report having been diagnosed with infertility (9.8 percent) than African American/Black women (3.6 percent), Hispanic women (3.7 percent), and Asian/Other women (6.1 percent) ($P < .001$; Figure 2). Asian/Other women reported infertility somewhat more frequently in 2008 than in 2007 (5.0 percent).
- A higher proportion of women with health insurance (8.3 percent) reported ever having been diagnosed with a fertility problem than women without insurance (4.4 percent; $P < .001$). However, it is not known whether current insurance status reflects status when fertility problems occurred.

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